JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor

SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FEBRUARY 20, 2025
2:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 308 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 643, HD2
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 643, HD2 relating to the coconut rhinoceros beetle program. The bill establishes short-term management initiatives for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) response program and appropriates funds for activities and positions related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control.

The Department strongly supports the measure. The University of Hawai'i works in close collaboration with the Department; short-term management initiatives and financial support for control and mitigation of CRB statewide is imperative to continue prioritized research and implementation projects the CRB Response Program has initiated.

Although the Department supports all the short-term management initiatives provided in the bill the Department has several comments related to those initiatives:

- While there are voluntary best management practices to mitigate and control CRB such as protective netting, other practices such as pesticide application are required and are regulated by State and Federal laws. The Pesticides Branch within the Department may be able to assist with the annual workshops and training opportunities.

- More specific details related to the subsidy should be provided such as maximum reimbursement per tree treated.
- The Plant Quarantine Branch does not currently have an approved treatment for fumigation of containerized mulch, compost, and other plant care components. The only approved treatment for moving mulch, compost, and other plant care components within the State is heat treatment. The Department is currently working with stakeholders to determine alternative fumigation techniques.
- Biocontrol research funding associated with the creation of positions should work in partnership with the Department's Plant Pest Control Branch, specifically the Biocontrol Section.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM
ʻŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAIʻI

Legislative Testimony
Hōʻike Manaʻo I Mua O Ka ʻAhaʻōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
February 20, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.
By
Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
And
Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

HB 643 HD2 – RELATED TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of HB 643 HD2 relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Program which establishes short-term management initiatives for a CRB response with appropriations for activities and positions.

We support the intent of this bill and offer the following comments. The landscape-altering impact of CRB is being realized across many neighborhoods on Oʻahu and Kauaʻi. As populations build on these islands, there is an increased threat of spread to Lānaʻi, Molokaʻi, and Niʻihau, as well as reintroductions to Maui and Hawaiʻi Island. The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response (CRBHawaii.org), a federally-funded emergency response program based in the University of Hawaiʻi Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (UHM-CTAHR), has been working to suppress and eradicate CRB subpopulations since 2014. The status of future federal funding to support this program is unclear and the current Cooperative Agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for canine detection and operational response terminate in June and August 2025, respectively.

UHM-CTAHR views this bill as an important effort to develop State support for the CRB Response program. We further note that the use of the only fumigant, sulfuryl fluoride, has very recently been discontinued pending further evaluation. There are no current alternatives for fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands. Researchers at UHM-CTAHR are collaborating with the Hawaiʻi Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and a local pest control company to evaluate an alternative fumigant in February 2025.

We support the intent of HB 643 HD2 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIAʻĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIAʻĀINA

STATE OF HAWAIʻI | KA MOKUʻĀINA ʻO HAWAIʻI
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA ʻOIHANA KUMUWAIWAI ʻĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKAʻOLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Thursday, February 20, 2025
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 643, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE

House Bill 643, House Draft 2, establishes short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program and appropriates funds for activities and positions related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a significant pest across the Pacific Region. The insect's primary host is the coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera),* which provides soil stabilization and coastal erosion control and is a culturally important component of our community forests in Hawaii. However, these beetles can also attack native forest species. Damage and mortality have been observed among our native Hawaiian palms, loulu (*Pritchardia* spp.), of which many species are threatened or endangered. The beetles can also attack hala (*Pandanus tectorius*), which is an essential component of native lowland wet forests and was used to weave sails for the original Hawaiian voyaging canoes and many utilitarian items such as baskets and mats and is an important resource within Hawaiian culture.

First detected in Hawaii in 2013, CRB had been contained to Oʻahu for many years but was found established on Kauaʻi in 2023. It was recently detected in very low levels on Maui and Hawaiʻi Islands, where eradication is still feasible. The University of Hawaiʻi (UH) CRB Response Team, which is the lead for CRB monitoring, response, research, and outreach statewide, was initially funded by the USDA APHIS with the goal of eradication for the State. Since statewide eradication is no longer feasible, federal funding for the UH's response is now in jeopardy.

Islands without established CRB populations are working closely with UH on prevention, survey, and rapid response. However, management of this destructive pest is also desperately needed on Oʻahu and Kauaʻi to mitigate impacts to natural resources, agricultural producers, tourism, and our community.

This measure would provide urgently needed State support to the UH CRB Response Team to continue and expand their work to help mitigate impacts and manage CRB. The team also leads in investigating potential landscape-level tools like biological control that have proven effective on other Pacific Islands and will be necessary to bring this pest under control.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
NALANI BRUN, DIRECTOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Nalani Kaauwai Brun
Director, Office of Economic Development- County of Kaua'i

Before the
House Committee on Finance
February 20, 2025, at 2:00 PM
House Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference

In consideration of
House Bill HB643 HD2
Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program

Honorable Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB643 HD2. The Office of Economic Development sincerely appreciates the committee's responsiveness in amending the bill to include Kaua'i in response team deployments, drone monitoring, and other critical measures. These updates reflect a strong commitment to statewide collaboration in managing this devastating pest.

As written, this bill provides vital support for mitigation, containment, and long-term biocontrol research. However, to ensure resources are effectively utilized, we respectfully request an amendment to explicitly ensure equitable distribution of funds based on infestation severity, risk level, and specific needs on each island, including Kaua'i. Additionally, we urge the committee to consider fast-tracking response efforts for Kaua'i to prevent further damage to our environment, economy, and cultural resources.

Requested Amendment to Section 2 (3) – Expedited Response for Kaua'i and Other Affected Islands

> *"Expanding the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program to Hawai'i Island, Maui, Moloka'i, Kaua'i, and Lāna'i upon detection of infestations, with priority given to the severity of infestation, risk level, and specific needs of each island, ensuring expedited services where most needed, including on Kaua'i."*

Requested Amendment to Section 4 – Equitable Funding and Expedited Action for Kaua'i

> *"Funds allocated under this Act shall be distributed equitably across all counties based on infestation severity, risk factors, and specific resource needs. Priority shall be given to areas where early intervention can prevent widespread economic and ecological damage."*

We appreciate the importance of ensuring funding is allocated where it will have the greatest impact. Some communities, like Kaua'i County, face a disproportionate burden from invasive species due to their landscape and economic reliance on natural resources. Equitable funding ensures resources are directed to high-risk areas where early action can most effectively prevent costly, large-scale infestations. Investing in containment now saves exponentially more in long-term eradication costs, reducing future burdens on both public and private landowners while protecting rural and agricultural economies.

- Kaua‘i already has confirmed CRB infestations, requiring immediate attention to prevent further spread.
- Fair resource allocation ensures that funds reach the areas most in need, rather than being distributed evenly without consideration of infestation risk or severity.
- Fast-tracking mitigation efforts on Kaua‘i could prevent a long-term crisis, reducing costs and protecting the agricultural and tourism industries.
- Delaying intervention increases the risk of exponential CRB population growth, making future eradication efforts significantly more challenging and expensive.

We fully support this bill and greatly appreciate the consideration of proposed amendments included in this testimony to ensure that resources are distributed equitably across all counties, based on infestation severity, risk factors, and specific resource needs. By incorporating clear language ensuring equitable funding distribution and prioritizing expedited action, we can strengthen the effectiveness of Hawai‘i’s CRB response and safeguard our state’s natural and economic resources.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL
1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

VOTING MEMBERS

DAWN CHANG
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL RESOURCES

SHARON HURD
HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

KATHLEEN HO, D.Env
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PARWINDER GREWAL, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

MARY ALICE EVANS
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chelsea Arnott, HISC Coordinator on behalf of
HISC Co-Chair Sharon Hurd and Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang

House Committee on
FINANCE
Thursday, February 20, 2025
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 308 HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE

House Bill 643 House Draft 2 seeks to address potential funding gaps that support the monitoring, control, outreach, and research for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle that is carried out by the University of Hawaii's CRB Response Team. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

The CRB Response Team is primarily funded by USDA APHIS. Funding started after the first detection in 2013 and is now in jeopardy since the intended goal of that funding was statewide eradication and that is no longer feasible with the current control tools. Currently USDA funding supports 86% of the UH CRB Response team which has taken the lead on monitoring, control, research, and outreach for the state but does work closely with state agencies, the counties, and partner organizations. The team consists of experienced researchers, data and operations managers, an outreach team, and staff for monitoring and response efforts.

Much progress has been made in the last ten years on finding better chemicals to treat and protect trees, establishing best management practices for green waste and mulch management, better monitoring tools like detector dogs and camera traps, and more aware and engaged communities. Progress continues with this team as now the lead researcher is working on the SOP and permits to import potential biocontrol agent that could offer landscape level management. Biocontrol agents have been released on other Pacific Islands for CRB with positive results. Providing subsidies to residents for canopy treatment is not something this team is equipped to undertake. HDOA requested funding through their executive budget request to provide services to remove dead trees and this subsidy amendment would be better executed through HDOA.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

COUNTY COUNCIL
Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualiʻi, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Līhuʻe, Kauaʻi, Hawaiʻi 96766

February 19, 2025

TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAʻI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 427, HD 2, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY AND
HB 643, HD 2, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 20, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 427, HD 2, Relating to Biosecurity and HB 463, HD 2, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kauaʻi County Council.

Regarding HB 427, HD 2, we need to support all efforts to increase biosecurity in Hawaiʻi.

Hawaiʻi is decades behind and already considered one of the most invaded ecosystems anywhere on Earth. We are in critical need of a functioning biosecurity effort in Hawaiʻi.

I have been advocating for years for increased biosecurity that protects our communities and environment, and I continue to today on behalf of Kauaʻi and our people.

Investing in biosecurity will save us money in the future, protect our way of life and environment, cultural practice and history.

Regarding HB 643, HD 2, please ensure that resources to fight infestations are effectively utilized and **explicitly ensure equitable distribution of funds based on severity of infestations, the risk level and specific needs on each island, including Kauaʻi**. I urge you to consider fast tracking response efforts for Kauaʻi to prevent further spread, as the situation is urgent on Kauaʻi.

Please support all efforts to increase and support more robust biosecurity for Hawaiʻi and please help Kauaʻi battle the impacts and spread of CRB, before it is too late for.

Kauaʻi is facing a growing infestation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles (CRB) and is in a critical time where we have gone from detection to an explosion in populations. Kauaʻi may still be in the window of eradication, and we need all the support we can get to accomplish this.

This invasive species is one of the largest invasive threats we may have ever faced in recent years. This species threatens many of our core agricultural crops and important cultural sites and plant species (such as our endemic Loulu, *Pritchardia,* palms and Hala, *Pandanas*) as well as our renowned and historical groves along the Royal Coconut Coast and the overall landscape look and tropical visual image of Kauaʻi and Hawaiʻi.

It is hard to even begin to calculate the economic cost that CRB will have on Kauaʻi. We must work collaboratively to be all in on eradication efforts and respond with unprecedented biosecurity actions.

Please do everything you can to fast-track action and response, education and funding for the management and, wherever possible, eradication of CRB.

We need to invest in both immediate responses and eradication efforts and long-term biological control options.

Please support HB 643, HD 2 and help provide as much support as possible to address the CRB crisis in every way possible.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 427, HD 2 and HB 643, HD 2. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

FERN HOLLAND
Councilmember, Kauaʻi County Council

AAO:dmc

P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 20, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 643, HD1
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawaiʻi's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaiʻi Farm Bureau supports HB 643, HD1, which establishes short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program and appropriates funds for activities and positions related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) was first discovered at Malama Bay on O'ahu in December 2013. CRB feeds on and damages coconut, royal, date, and fan palms. If these preferred food sources are unavailable, CRB can shift to feed on other palms and tropical crops such as betelnut, Pandanus species, banana, pineapple, and sugarcane. CRBs use their front legs and horns to dig into the crown of trees. Then, they use their sucking mouthparts to feed on the juices in the inner spear. Adult CRB damage living palms, either killing the tree due to direct damage or opening up the tree to fatal damage from other insects or pathogens.

Coconut rhinoceros beetle detection has steadily increased. High-catch areas continue to be Pearl City Peninsula, Waipiʻo Peninsula, West Loch, ʻEwa Beach, and Central Oʻahu. We're seeing regular finds on the West Side of Oʻahu, increased detection on the North Shore, and concerning trap finds in new areas of Laie, Kahuku, and Waimānalo. The CRB Response provides tools for community members to minimize risk and train businesses to comply with DOA's rule.

HFB agrees that we need resources to control the CRB that will protect our essential palms and crops, reduce the potential for damage to natural resources, and avoid any adverse effects on the health and safety of our residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-643-HD-2
Submitted on: 2/19/2025 2:21:34 AM
Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Fox	Malama Kaua'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This pest is expanding its attack to even more of our staple foods including kalo - it must be stopped. This bill is a step in the right direction.

BIISC
23 E. Kawili St.
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 933-3340
www.biisc.org

February 19, 2025

Hearing: House Committee on Finance

RE: HB643

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 643, which establishes short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) response program and appropriates funding for critical control activities and positions.

The University of Hawai'i CRB Response team on Oʻahu has been at the forefront of efforts to control this invasive pest, but their work has relied heavily on funding from the USDA, which is limited in scope. Stable funding from our state is essential to ensure that CRB control efforts can continue as the species is detected in new locations, as it was here on Hawaiʻi Island in Waikoloa in late 2023. Since that detection, we at BIISC have received crucial information, guidance, and support from the UH-CRB Response team in our efforts to combat this beetle on our island. While the number of detections remains low, we are at a pivotal moment. Eradication of CRB on Hawaiʻi Island is still possible, but only with continued support and expertise from the CRB Response Team.

We are also strongly in favor of the funding proposed in HB643 to support the development of a biocontrol solution—an essential component of long-term management. Biocontrol provides a sustainable, cost-effective way to reduce CRB populations and lessen the pest's impact on our environment and economy. This proactive approach is especially critical for Hawaiʻi, where the stakes are high and the costs of inaction are even higher.

As someone working directly with communities to address invasive species issues, I have witnessed firsthand the value of a strong and well-supported response program. The funding provided by HB643 will extend critical support to neighbor islands, ensuring a coordinated effort to control CRB and protect Hawaiʻi's unique environment and cultural resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB643. Mahalo for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Me ka haʻahaʻa,

Kawehi Young
Public Outreach Coordinator
Big Island Invasive Species Committee

HB-643-HD-2
Submitted on: 2/19/2025 11:52:17 AM
Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tobias Koehler	National Tropical Botanical Garden	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are requesting that all language referring to "residential palm owners" be expanded to state "residential and 501(c)3 not-for-profit palm owners" in Sections 2, 3, and 4.

The National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG) is a 501(c)3 non-profit headquartered in Kalaheo on the island of Kauai. NTBG has five gardens (four in Hawaii) and over 2,000 acres under its care, with a primary mission of conserving native Hawaiian and culturally significant plants.

Hawaii's native fan palms, known as Loulu (*Pritchardia* sp.) are facing an existential threat from Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB): by some measures, more so than coconut palms. There is an extremely urgent need to be able to collect fruit/seeds to ensure these palms' survival.

Hawaii is home to approximately 25 Loulu species. Several of these species are critically endangered. Several are single-island endemics, meaning their wild population exists on one island, and no where else on earth. State-wide, wild populations tend to be found in hard to reach areas, requiring helicopter or extensive hiking to access.

Loulu collections on private property, specifically in botanical garden collections, represent a "life boat" for these species: they are a critical source of seeds. Faced with CRB, managing these collections for conservation and preservation is much more practical than trying to work with wild populations in remote locations.

Presently, non-profits are faced with actively managing CRB using operational funding. Previous funding opportunities have centered around research (which NTBG is a willing participant), community outreach (again which NTBG is a willing contributor towards) and landscaping industry (which NTBG is not technically a part of). None of these addresses active CRB prevention and management activities.

Non-profits need access to apply for direct support for CRB management.

Modifying the language in the proposed bill, will afford NTBG and other non-profits the opportunity to apply for and potentially receive funding to offset some of the costs of managing for CRB until an effective biocontrol or other long term solution presents itself.

cgaps
STOP THE SILENT INVASION

COORDINATING GROUP ON
ALIEN PEST SPECIES

House of Representatives
Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 20, 2025
2:00 PM Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB643 HD2

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in strong support of HB643 HD2**, *Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program*, which provides funding to the University of Hawaii to support Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Response. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is ending its funding for CRB Response. Stable support from the State for CRB Response is necessary for continuing work in service to communities and cooperating agencies and can be used to leverage additional Federal funding.

For over a decade, CRB Response has worked to protect Hawaii's communities, industries, and natural environment from the threats and impacts of CRB. CRB Response provides education, awareness, detection, prevention, and treatments to meet these goals and is staffed by CRB experts who work full-time to address the impacts of CRB across Hawaii.

The CRB Response was established as an emergency response under the incident command system (ICS) after CRB was first detected on Oahu in 2013. They are a grant-funded organization managed through the University of Hawaii's Agrosecurity Lab under the direction of Dr. Michael Melzer. Multiple grant sources including USDA, Department of Defense (DOD), and Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) have supported the CRB Response Team through the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii. This structure has allowed the CRB Response to provide the University of Hawaii's research expertise, fieldwork, and extension/outreach to help guide the response to this pest.

The CRB Response succeeded in keeping CRB populations contained to the initial detection region on Oʻahu for more than 5 years despite the delay in regulatory actions to manage the intrastate (on-island) movement of palms, greenwaste, compost, and other materials known to be used by CRB. The CRB Response has also been integral to the responses to CRB on Kauaʻi, Maui, and Hawaiʻi Island.

In addition to this work, CRB Response has been looking at longer-term management solutions including the testing of a CRB-specific biological control that has been effective elsewhere at reducing the impacts of CRB. This work is the best hope for niu, native endangered loulu palms, and other important plants affected by CRB.

For all these reasons we strongly support HB643 HD2. Mahalo for the opportunity to support the bill and for consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow

HB-643-HD-2
Submitted on: 2/18/2025 2:34:01 PM
Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OMG, this crucial bill needs to be passed ***YESTERDAY***!

HB-643-HD-2
Submitted on: 2/18/2025 2:41:26 PM
Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There is never as good a time like the present, as 'they' wisely say.

That said, as you contemplate the merits of this bill and whether or not you want to pass it, be reassured that, **at present, at this very moment, and during the entire time of your hearing, CRB infestations on Oahu are growing exponentially**.

Wish I could say, "*No pressure here!*", but alas, I couldn't, even if I tried.

Please pass this bill. Mahalo.

HB-643-HD-2
Submitted on: 2/18/2025 3:03:50 PM
Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Dillon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the AGR, HED and FIN Committees.

Please take action immediately to initiate funds and positions to stop the infestation of the coconut Rhinoseros Beetle. We know only too well on Hawaii Island what the results are of ignoring an invasive species. When nothing was done here regarding the coqui frogs they multiplied like wildfire and now they are everywhere and cannot be controlled. Please take steps to control the coconut beetle before it is too late and nothing can be done. Our islands will not be the same without coconut palms.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joy Dillon, Hilo Resident

HB-643-HD-2
Submitted on: 2/19/2025 9:36:14 AM
Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Amos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Chloe Amos and I strongly support HB643. If the coconut rhinoceros beetle issue does not get resolved as quickly as possible, our islands will be severely less climate resilient and agriculturally sustainable. We must prioritize putting resources towards solving the coconut rhinoceros beetle issue now, before it's too late and we find ourselves in a seriously compromised situation for the ecological health of our islands and the potential for surviving the coming years of climate crisis.

Thank you for supporting HB643.

Chloe Amos

HAWAII PACIFIC UNIVERSITY Environmental Studies

HB 643 HD 2
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM
House Committee on Finance
Video Conference – Thursday, February 20, 2025
2:00 P.M., State Capitol Via Video Conference
By
Elizabeth Nuttall, Department of Natural and Computational Sciences

Dear committee members, I am Elizabeth Nuttall, an undergraduate student at Hawai'i Pacific University. I am writing this testimony in support of HB643, which aims to address the problems wrought by invasive Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle by providing the response program with funds they so desperately need. This is important for protecting Hawai'i's communities' environmental and cultural heritage from the consequences of CRB infestations.

The harm caused by CRB infestations is beyond just tree damage. Their larvae also threaten the environment, the economy, and Hawaiian culture. They breed in organic materials of green waste and mulch and have been found in commercial soil. If it is not managed for loss of trees, replanting of trees, and the mitigative measures, the costs will exceed the funding that is requested.

By securing a fund as soon as possible, Hawai'i can mitigate any long-term financial risks and protect the community from economic harm.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit a testimony on this Bill.